

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY
BERKELEY 4, CALIFORNIA

August 20, 1956

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
The University of Wisconsin
Madison 6, Wisconsin

Dear Joshua:

It is true that a graduate student of mine who was interested in the problem on his own has received his doctorate degree on the basis of a thesis in which he, following the work of a Russian investigator, separated X and Y spermatozoa by electrophoresis and demonstrated this fact by the results of artificial insemination. Unfortunately the data were not very large, although very highly significant, and we decided after the filing of the thesis last year to wait with publication until one more carefully controlled repeat experiment had succeeded. As it turned out sterility interfered with these experiments and no new data have been added, although strenuous efforts are underway to obtain them. Until that time I am very happy that the newspapers have not picked up the story, although anyone can really get it out of the university library.

Personally I am not too deeply concerned over the social implications of what you call such a bombshell. It will be some time until the methods will be applicable from rabbits to domesticated animals and from them there will still be a certain step toward man. But even when the application has succeeded, I wonder whether a great revolution in regards to the sex ratio will occur? Presumably there may be some tendency for the first born to be of the male sex to be followed by a female, but even this is doubtful.

I am very sorry to learn that you are not going to Japan. Someday I would like to hear what really happened.

With kind regards to you and your wife,

Sincerely yours,



Curt Stern

CS/rr